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# The black man and the American city

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"THE BLACK MAN AND THE AMERICAN CITY"

Design and Production of a Visual Communication

Gene E. DePrez

Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

School of Art and Design  
College of Fine and Applied Arts  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Submitted August 30, 1968

Advisor: Prof. Hans J. Barschel

## DEDICATION

To the people confined to the ghettos, that they may escape; and to Patricia, Michel, Therese and all my friends and associates, that they may understand.

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FRAMES FROM THE FILM: ON THE SECTION DIVIDERS

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/// HOME SWEET HOME ///

I

Introduction

THE SUBJECT

PURPOSE OF THESIS:

To further understanding between whites and blacks through the design and production of a visual communication--a motion picture film that would document the anguish and dilemma of the Negro in the American City.



Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black and one white--separate and unequal....Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American....This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible....Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.... ..What white Americans have never fully understood--but what the Negro can never forget--is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto....Certain fundamental matters are clear. Of these, the most fundamental is the racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans. Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively in the past; it now threatens to do so again. White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.<sup>1</sup>

--Report of the National Advisory Commission on  
Civil Disorders

This nation is in crisis. The report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders cites the fact that nearly 150 American communities suffered "racial disorders" during the summer of 1967. Property losses from burnings and lootings ran into millions of dollars, and many people were killed or wounded. .

There is no doubt that it will continue.

The Negro and the Cities constitute the nation's most alarming domestic problem. Yet, except when violence flares up, people ignore its appalling realities: the brutal ugliness of many a family's existence....the aimless futility of ghetto life. The cycle of despair--no jobs, bad housing, worse education--traps those people in the ghetto as the rest of America grows and prospers.

For a generation, the interlocking problems of race and poverty have grown steadily worse. Today it is our number one crisis, and we seem paralyzed by its dimensions.

Scores dead, many hundreds wounded, thousands imprisoned, millions of dollars in damage provide the bitter evidence. The "Dream" was of one nation of men of different origins abiding together in peace, democracy and equality. The reality was--and is--two Americas, one white, comfortable and free--one black, poor and unfettered.

For blacks, the "American Dream" has never been more than a nightmare--a slow, winding descent into despair. They had somehow clung to the notion that it would be different for their sons and daughters--as their parents had earlier hoped it would be different for them. Time and time again the message becomes obvious: "it isn't."

In the impacted slums of the great American Cities, black faces looked out of tenement windows while bulldozers tore down the houses around them to make way for super-highways that would enable white suburbanites to reach their jobs quicker, or to erect sparkling new dwellings priced out of the range of the evicted, or to build new towering superghettos.

Each day, millions of blacks turned to the electronic opiate, television, to watch the people of that other America enjoying the fruits of affluence. It might have well been a telecast from another planet.

Kids live with the knowledge that they were written off before they were born. They do not need pious explanations that "education will solve your problem" because they know that every year in a ghetto school will throw them farther behind their white counterparts, and even if they persevere, the jobless rate for black high school graduates is about the same as that for blacks who lack a diploma...and higher than for white dropouts.

"ON DESPAIR..."

"There's not enough in the refrigerator to feed the baby." Nor to feed any of the other four or five or ten children sleeping on the tattered, sheetless mattresses. That's the thought you wake up with. You wake up tired, to another day you wish hadn't happened. The little sunlight that penetrates the windows lights up the cracked, peeling linoleum, the rat holes, the falling plaster, the cockroaches. Always the cockroaches.

You lie there, running down your list of worries. The rent: if there's enough to pay that, will there be any left to buy the coats and the shoes and school supplies that those children have got to have? Is it going to be another cold day, because if it is, you're going to have to light the oven and leave the door open so the apartment will have at least a little heat. That means the kids are going to have to wear their coats all day, bundled up in blankets in the kitchen, watching the TV. And the baby--he'll be hungry and cold. The welfare check's due soon, not soon enough. But you manage, because you always manage. Every once in a while you find yourself wondering if there's a life where you don't all the time have to manage and be afraid and lose sleep and worry about those sneak visits by the welfare people, checking up on you. But you don't do that often--that's a kind of dreaming you haven't time or energy for.

If anybody ever asked you to, you could write a book about what despair is when it happens. That's what you feel when there's never quite enough--food or clothes or heat or time to lie back and dream. That's giving up dreams that anything is ever going to be better. That's the husband and father who ran away from you. That's the children whose exposure to dope and violence and viciousness makes your life a twenty-four-hour anxiety watch.

That's being a nigger in the ghetto.<sup>2</sup>  
...thoughts of a ghetto mother.

--from Blacks Insist, Whites Resist

56% of the country's non-white families live in central cities today, and of these nearly 2/3 live in neighborhoods marked by substandard housing and general urban blight...

For these citizens, condemned by segregation and poverty to live in decaying slums....the goal of a decent home and suitable environment is as far distant as ever...

The reasons many Negroes live in decaying slums are not difficult to discover. First and foremost is poverty. Most ghetto residents cannot pay the rent necessary to support decent housing. The second reason--discrimination: not only does discrimination prevent access to non-ghetto areas, but makes it profitable for landlords to break up ghetto apartments for denser occupancy, hastening housing deterioration.<sup>3</sup>

--Report of the National Advisory Commission on  
Civil Disorders

You have to see it....hear it....

See the ghetto, the despair, the apathy and yet the anger, it breeds; you have to hear the voices of despair or of those who are finally fed up, and plead with you to do something--or they will.

"We need help. We livin' like rats." "I want the right to determine where I will live, we don't want you to hand us anything. I'm not going to stand for it anymore!"

You have to be brought close to the edge of despair yourself. You have to see and hear and feel the ghetto!

Go to the ghetto. See crumbling tenements, battered garbage cans, vacant lots littered with the refuse of years. See the hopeless men sitting on dirty stoops, drinking beer. And see the little children running wild--aimlessly through the streets.

"If you stay on the street and live, you are angry. If you are aware of what is happening to you, if you are aware that someone is keeping you down, exploiting you, charging you high prices and high rents for old buildings that should have been torn down, your alive--and your angry."

--an angry young black



What will be the response of the American people?  
Simple repression or the development of means to erradicate  
the causes of frustration and violence, or both.

Will the cry be heard?

// 'This is my bedroom. This is where I sleep.  
Nothing but rats, roaches...and everything.' //



II

The  
PLAN

Acceptance by the Thesis Committee of the proposal led to immediate detailed planning of the project to maximize use of the time available before the Summer Session.

Foremost was the need to estimate time and costs required to complete various phases of the project and to begin detailed content research and further study of the motion picture medium.

#### TIME TABLE

It was obvious, even with little knowledge of what form the final film might take, that most of the six week Summer Session would be needed to edit the film, recognizing the laboratory time involved. Working back from the end of the Summer Session a timetable was worked out making use of weekends and other available time (I was working full time for Kodak) during April, May and June. This tentative schedule was reviewed with my technical advisor, and although he thought it was extremely tight, he approved it as "being possible".

The schedule called for subject and media research, and time and cost estimates by May 11, with a concept outline by May 24. By the same date a source of funding had to be known, and this was probably going to be the most difficult part of the work. The project had been roughly estimated to cost \$2500, not including tuition and lost pay, which would bring the total close to \$4500.

Shooting was scheduled to begin on the Memorial Day weekend and continue evenings and weekends until the start of the Summer Session. It would be completed during the first week of the session.

As it turned out, this careful advanced planning of time proved to be the most valuable single aspect of the project. Not only did it force me into creative thinking early, but it let me discover relationships and avoid bad judgments that may have jeopardized the completion of the project.

I requested and was granted an educational leave of absence by Kodak for full time work on my thesis during the six week RIT Summer Program.

#### CONTENT RESEARCH

My investigation of the black man and his relationship to the City was primarily a continuation of the intensive activity in urban affairs that I had been involved in for over the past year:

- Participation in an Urban Seminar-Workshop. Ten hours a month were spent in these sessions that studied the psychological implications of ghetto living and patterns of community organization for social change. Outstanding local and national resource people presented their ideas and then defended them during active discussion periods that followed. Speakers included the city

manager, state and federal officials, sociologists, industrialists, educators and black leaders. Some were universally respected, some were controversial. This experience more than any other increased my convictions and deepened my commitment to work with the black community in solving our mutual problems.

- As a member of the steering committee of a Metropolitan Urban Affairs Council and chairman of its communication and education committee, I was involved in the planning of strategies for attempting social change, particularly in white attitudes toward the urban crisis. Through this activity I became more convinced than ever that effective communication is a most essential part of any attempt to alleviate the rift between black and white, affluent and poor.
- During the content research phase of the thesis project I relied heavily on individual resource people. These were the people who knew the situation best, they were living with it day by day. Although they did not always agree in interpreting what they saw, their views crystallized for me the scope of what I had to do. I talked with those in city planning, rehabilitation and housing, urban education, welfare and community organization. But, I also talked to

the people themselves, and in fact, gave greater weight to their directly placed pleas than I ever could to all the logical, statistic loaded arguments of the many experts I talked with. The most direct contributions were made by the black leaders I came in contact with, who gave me a real insight into ghetto thinking.

Their constructive ideas of organizing to achieve goals, could eliminate or begin to, the despair that comes from powerlessness. I fully understood what black power meant--power of pride, of self-worth, of achievement, success against or within the system.

- I talked with people who felt they had met the establishment head on, and were winning. Many of these individuals are listed in the appendix.
- Realizing that white attitudes played more than an equal role in keeping our cities crisis ridden, I attended several suburban meetings to get a dimension on the feelings and understanding in the towns. Zoning hearings and Human Relations Council meetings in Penfield, Perinton, Pittsford and Webster, supposedly our most sophisticated suburban areas, demonstrated the almost complete insensitivity to the dilemma of fellow black citizen

confined to the inner city.

The "subtleties" of racism were all too apparent.

Education needs to be directed at the hard shelled, uninvolved people of the suburbs. Without intelligent, compassionate action and understanding on their part, no amount of education is going to help the slum dweller get out of his crumbling, rat infested environment. Without the dignity of work, and a decent place to live, he can never be expected to become any more than an unmotivated shadow of a human being.

- Many books, reports, magazine articles, films and television programs were read or seen in preparation for the thesis. These are listed in the appendices. Chief among these for subject impact, was the lucid and comprehensive Crisis In Black and White.<sup>4</sup> This is a book that treats nearly every major aspect of white insensitivity and misconception. Here is a book written by a white editor of Fortune magazine in terms and with logical sincerity that reaches anyone who reads it.

In other ways, The Tenement produced by CBS-TV and Will the Cry Be Heard?<sup>5</sup> a photo essay by Gordon Parks in Life magazine, carry tremendous visual



impact and create vicariously, empathy for the black ghetto resident.

All of these experiences helped develop, both in mind and heart, my understanding of the situation and what had to be done, and how the story could be best communicated.

#### MEDIA RESEARCH

Recognizing my limited knowledge of the motion picture as a medium, I expanded my awareness of the psychological and communication aspects of it as well as the technical background that would be required. Activities included:

- Attendance at the University of Rochester Symposium on the Current Cinema in April. One session specifically dealt with the documentary and included discussions by Robert Drew, D. A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock.
- Discussion with several people involved in both the creative and technical side of film making.
- Reading of several books in film style and technique.
- Gathering technical information, primarily from Mr. Floberg, regarding equipment, supplies and costs required to complete the film.

FUNDING

Because of the cost of motion picture production, my full attention in April was given to estimating costs and identifying potential sources of funds and/or equipment.

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During several meetings with Mr. Floberg, needed equipment was determined and quantities of film and processing were projected and necessary facilities specified. These expenses were expected to reach over \$2,500, not including editing facilities which were available through RIT. (See Appendix)

This projected cost estimate, together with the thesis proposal was to be sent to some 20 organizations and individuals who might be interested in sponsoring or sharing in the funding of the thesis project. In the several preliminary phone contacts I made, I was told of interest in the project, but it looked doubtful that any organization could make a decision soon enough to permit shooting on schedule.

// 'I want to move to Brighton. . . It's cleaner there.' //



III

The  
ACTUAL  
PROJECT

In early May, at about the time I was preparing to send out the proposal in an attempt to secure a grant, I was contacted by the producer of a television documentary on housing that was to be filmed in Rochester during the Summer months. The film was being produced by Darcy Associates, Inc. for the Metropolitan Housing Committee. The civic committee had been appointed by the city and county managers, with Mr. Joseph Wilson, Chairman of the Xerox Corporation as its chairman. The film was to be made under a joint grant from the Eastman Kodak Company and Xerox.

The producer, Henry Senke, had been given my name. We discussed my possible involvement and its relationship to my thesis project. A segment of the documentary was to deal with the ghetto, and it was agreed that if certain conditions were met, I could assist in the production of the documentary as a way to finance my thesis.

The Conditions were:

- The ghetto segment would fall within the proposed subject outline that had been accepted by the thesis committee;
- I would have complete control of the design and production of that segment;
- It would be produced within the schedule I had set for myself; and
- My advisor would accept this arrangement as a way to finance my film.

All these conditions were met and I was made associate producer of the documentary, with specific responsibility for the sequence on ghetto housing. I was to plan and produce a film approximately 13½ minutes in length detailing the effect the housing crisis in Rochester has on the black man in the ghettos of the inner city--exactly the objectives of my earlier proposal. The sponsors would provide the equipment, materials and any additional personnel necessary.

RIT students in photo-illustration were selected as cameramen/soundmen and a film editor I had recommended was selected to do the editing.

Kodak released me in early June to help plan the entire documentary as well as produce the ghetto segment.



// 'Who would want to live in a place like this---a slum?!' //



IV

The  
CREATIVE  
REPORT



"To show something as everyone sees it is to have accomplished nothing. . .

...film is built, built up from separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material...

...the build up of filmic space. Filmic space appears as a synthesis of real elements picked out by the camera...

...guided by the director, the camera removes all superfluity and directs the attention of the viewer in such a way that he will see only that which is significant and characteristic."<sup>6</sup>

--V. I. Poduvin  
The Plastic Material

"Film is the art of space-time...

...the film is essentially analysis. The director makes his material more significant even than actuality by jumping from one stepping stone of significance to another."<sup>7</sup>

--Herbert Read  
Towards Film Aesthetic

Between the actual event and its appearance on the screen, there is a marked difference. It is precisely this difference that makes film art.

The process of film making goes far beyond the photographing of life. Through juxtaposition of detail, an interpretation of life is created.

This is what I wanted to explore. Somehow the truth could only be shown if actuality was heightened and presented to the uninvolved viewer in such a way that he would be moved by the extraordinary presentation of fact that he saw. Being there in the ghetto is one thing. Vicariously experiencing it is something much less. Somehow the challenge was to overcome that loss of impact that comes with being far removed from the truth. Reality had to be recreated synthetically.

This was the most difficult task--to capture and transform the moods, the atmosphere, the tensions, the smell and tone of despair into film.

The documentary had to be real. Someone has defined the true documentary as "the creative use of reality."

D. A. Pennebaker has said "Film should be in the first place something that you don't doubt. You believe what you see".<sup>8</sup>

The camera has an overwhelming desire to see, to analyze, a hunger for reality. Its use to probe and report on human life is unequalled. With recent technical improvements that make equipment light and flexible, film can

observe and record with a minimum of interference.

The greatest effort goes into being in the right place at the right time--understanding what's about to happen, understanding what has to be gotten as it happens, and being ready and sensitive to get it at the time it happens.

The film maker's problem is how to convey the feeling of being there. Personality as well as creativity makes all the difference in the world. Shooting what happens as it happens is dependent on great sensitivity. The material must be mastered on the spot. The film maker must become intimate with it. He does this by ordering it.

Most documentaries are not only boring, but they are fake. They are not believable. You can see someone directing them. They become mechanical, simply journalistic, reporting verbally.

My goal was to recreate actuality--to have the truth told about human conditions in the ghetto. To saturate every sense with what it means to be black and alive in the ghetto.

This couldn't be a lecture. To be convincing the truth had to be discovered. The value of film is not to carry information like a newspaper, but rather to bring the viewer in contact with the situation--in such close contact that what he sees cannot be doubted. That is when he will react--when he will act and want to change those conditions.

To clarify one thing, one cannot film simply what happens, the film maker has to have a fairly good idea of what it is that he is after. Yet, he must be willing and always ready to adapt as the situation unfolds. Usually what is happening is far more intriguing.

In my first treatment ideas for instance, I was concerned primarily with technique. My thought was to play remarks typical of white racism over scenes in the ghetto filmed in black and white. These scenes would seem to substantiate the feelings expressed in the remarks. Perhaps they would be in slow motion or negative for further symbolism.

These sequences would be contrasted and thus contradicted by fast paced color sequences that would show another view of the ghetto. This one would be positive. It would demonstrate "soul" in music, in food, in feeling of brotherness. It would show the pride a blackman can have in what he does. It would attempt to probe into the deepest meaning of "black is beautiful."

Unfortunately as an approach, it was doomed to failure. There is no beauty in the ghetto, no positive side to show. I soon realized this.

Later as I began to define the film in terms of the housing crisis and as part of the larger documentary, I realized something else. My intention to show the truth-- "to tell it like it is"--was being diluted by my incredible assumption that I knew how it was. I didn't!

From that point the film content was determined by black people, people who lived in and felt the oppression of the ghetto. My role was to help them express their feelings and to interpret their story into filmic terms.

A young black minister, a friend of mine, defined for me what it meant to live THERE. He told me; he showed me; he led me to it, pointed, and said "this is where we have to live." I interpreted it. Once I found out what they knew as blacks, I could recreate for whites so they could see.

They led me around, up alleys, through garbage heaps, over dead rats. I saw incredible things, and met beautiful people. As I got to know them over five weeks, I could begin to understand their situation. Only then could the film evolve.

Everywhere I went I saw kids;

Kids and holes in the floor--

Kids and broken windows--

Kids playing in rubbish piles--

Kids sleeping under ceilings ready to fall,  
four or five together in beds that were  
crawling with insects and vermin--

Kids eating in roach infested kitchens--

Kids and rats, As big as alleycats, Yes.

Always the vision of kids, intermingling with the drone of adult voices describing the filth in which they are forced to live, in housing in so need of repair that it can't be kept clean.

We started filming these interviews with many cutaways of the unbelievable rooms that suburbanites couldn't possibly realize existed, or they wouldn't let it go on. But the basic form the film was to take was still hazy.

Fellini has said that the concept begins with something very vague--a chance remark, a hazy event unrelated to a particular situation.<sup>9</sup>

One day that happened. As we were shooting exterior shots and cutaways in some of the back alleys, we came across a group of kids playing in the puddles and glass. We began to work with them, again the image of kids somehow stuck in my mind. Several had old worn out automobile tires which they, like many ghetto kids, roll up and down the alleys.

Suddenly the idea was there. Kids, their environment, a way to bring it all together. Their tire rolling symbolized so many things. Confinement, aimlessness, an attempt to forget their problems, their hunger, their future.

Up and down and around. Past piles of garbage, broken houses--broken homes, junked cars, over glass, around rats--here was a chance for the camera to observe, and record all that was there.

This experience, together with the interviews would communicate the whole rotten situation. The faces of children would reach and move all the uninvolved whites who had the courage to watch and see.

This was the treatment that crystalized during seven working days of shooting. Later Ron Mix, one of the cameramen, noticed the trainload of automobiles going through the inner city. I had him film it to heighten the impact of poverty. It symbolized in bold contrast to the worn out tires of the ghetto kids, the wealth of a nation that doesn't want to recognize the ugliness of its urban cores.

Only after several days of being seen with ghetto leaders, and with their introduction, were we accepted. Only after our sincerity had been demonstrated, was there a willingness to cooperate. I practically lived on Manhattan Street for a week before we started shooting, to gain that acceptance, and even then it was cautious and not everyone cooperated.

Those who did, came across with complete honesty: The sixty year old man, broken with alcoholism, who sat on the edge of his bed, "This is where I sleep--roaches, rats, everything"; the boy playing on the broken, glass littered, concrete "recreation area" of Hanover Houses, "I want to move to Brighton, it's cleaner there"; The young black woman on the street who's "gotta tell it like it is"; and finally the man pleading for help--from anybody, "we livin' like rats"....and so they were.

My biggest problem was to keep from interfering. I had to guide happenings before the camera. If I attempted to "direct", everything would have been lost. They did so well telling it like it is!

In New York City, it was born.

"The foundation of film art," said V. I. Pudovkin, "is editing ...film is built, built up from the separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material".<sup>10</sup>

Editing is where it happens. As I worked on the Moviola in New York, it began to take form. Film images are plastic material, forms and movements that when put properly together, like words in literature, can express the whole content of the idea.

Meaning is communicated through style, mood, emphasis and shape. Pudovkin suggests separate pieces can be put together in a rhythm, a synthesis. Sergie Eisenstein on the other hand, says that montage is conflict--a collision of ideas. "The dynamics of montage serve as impulses driving toward the total film."<sup>11</sup>

This collision of two pieces in opposition to each other is the basis for much of the ghetto sequence. I wanted to constantly shock and pound the viewer with the impressions of a slum. The contrast and flashes of the shiny automobiles rumbling through on the train, heightened the impact of seeing raw poverty. The sound of the train became a symbol of oppression and confinement.



The sequences went together in a much different way than I had envisioned while we were shooting. At the editing bench and later in the Moviola completely different relationships became obvious and looked much stronger.

During the weeks of editing as this 15 minute segment was edited from approximately 5000 feet of film to about 450 feet, I experienced a whole new feeling. I was recreating in a quarter hour that which had been nourished and witnessed over many weeks. This condensing of time and space was fascinating, this was the mystique of film--shaping raw material into filmic form--this was art.

Style and technique were not sought after as ends in themselves. Rather they resulted from experimenting with many different forms and configurations.

I was after emotional involvement, and hoped to achieve it through rapid and flash cutting, jump cuts, discontinuity of time and space and use of extreme closeups.

Primarily, I wanted to see kids and conditions, driving home as directly as I could--these kids haven't got a chance, if they grow up in this environment.

"Film has the power to condense, to show the essence of things...

...To make a picture is like leaving for a trip. And the most interesting part of a trip is what you discover on the way."<sup>12</sup>

Federico Fellini







// 'They treat us like rats.' //



// 'My sister is not lying.' //

V

The  
TECHNICAL  
REPORT

The following technical report will be interesting to many reading this report.

#### EQUIPMENT USED

##### Cameras:

2 Eclair NPR's with Angenieux 12-120 zoom lenses and a 5.7 Tegea wide angle lens.

1 Arriflex 16 mm with Tyler Zoom Lens and special Tyler Mini-Mount for use in helicopter and car.

1 Canon Scoopic 16 with f/1.6, 5.85:1 zoom lens

##### Lighting:

3 ColorTran "6" Mini-lites

1 ColorTran variable broad

##### Recorder:

Nagra NPO

##### Microphones:

1 Sennheiser wireless

1 Electro-voice 642 shotgun

1 Electro-voice 622 omni-directional

1 Nagra BM mixer

#### FILM

##### Original:

Eastman Kodak Ektachrome EF (7242) Tungsten

#### TAPE

##### Original:

3M #201 Low Noise, Acetate

Double system sound was used for highest quality, low flutter, high frequency response and to assure maximum Flexibility in editing.

EF film was chosen for its high speed and particularly for its good color saturation for television.

The shooting crew was normally made up of myself as director, with a cameraman and soundman. Some situations called for a second cameraman, and in other instances I shot silent footage alone.

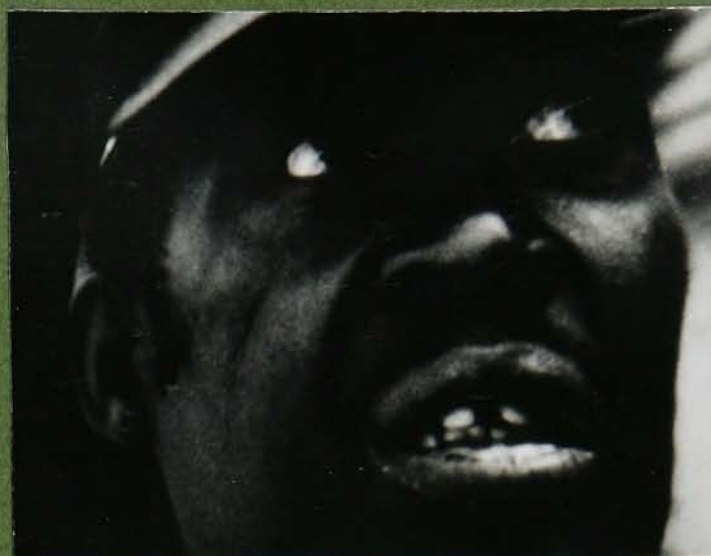
The film was shot at about 30 locations where sync sound was required, plus silent cutaways, exteriors, traveling shots and the tire rolling sequence. Locations were all in the South East Loop area (Manhattan and George Streets) and the Seventh Ward (Hand, Joiner and Henry Streets and Hanover Houses).

Over 5000 feet of film was shot with approximately 600 being used in the final film, a shooting ratio of about 8:1.

Editing was accomplished in the equivalent of 10 working days, not including time in the laboratory during the various steps.



// 'We need help! We livin' like rats.' //





VI

A

FINAL

NOTE

The full documentary "Think About It" produced for the Metropolitan Housing Committee, attempts to create a public awareness of the critical housing shortage in metropolitan Rochester. It documents the need, and offers opinions on how the situation can be corrected.

The 15 minute ghetto sequence, concentrates on communicating the conditions in the inner city, particularly those in which the Negro is forced to live. The full hour program is to be shown on all four local television stations in early September, as part of an overall communications program coordinated by Darcy Associates.

My involvement in the production grew beyond producing the ghetto section into a much larger role. I directed half of the sound sync situations in the full documentary and was eventually named Co-Producer.

- <sup>1</sup>Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders  
(New York: Bantam Books, 1968)
- <sup>2</sup>Dennis E. Shoemaker, Blacks Insist; Whites Resist  
(Philadelphia: United Presbyterian Church U. S. A. 1968)
- <sup>3</sup>Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders
- <sup>4</sup>Charles E. Silberman, Crisis In Black and White  
(New York: Random House, 1964)
- <sup>5</sup>Gordon Parks, "Will The Cry Be Heard?"  
Life, (March 8, 1968)
- <sup>6</sup>Richard Dyer McCann, ed., Film: A Montage of Theories  
(New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1966), 23-33
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., 165-9
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 297
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., 378
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 24
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., 36
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 377-84



## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

THESIS PROPOSAL

The following are copies of the Thesis Proposal with its cover letter, the letter of approval from the Graduate Committee and note from the Dean, following the first showing of the film.

Dean Harold J. Brennan, Chairman  
Graduate Committee  
College of Fine and Applied Arts  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Box 3410  
Rochester, New York, 14614

Dear Mr. Brennan:

Enclosed is my Thesis Proposal. It is submitted as one of the requirements in completing my work in the Master of Fine Arts Program.

In submitting my proposal, let me share my enthusiasm with the Graduate Committee regarding my choice of thesis. It has been chosen after much thought, and directly relates to several personal goals to which I am deeply committed.

First, I find excitement in the City as a unique contemporary experience and environment. But I am very much concerned with its problems. I have involved myself in many activities that relate to urban affairs. Seminars, study groups and more recently action groups in which I am participating, are seeking new and innovative ways to alleviate the conditions that degenerate a city and its people. Many of these conditions are focused around the Negro ghetto, the inner city, the environment--the way of life--in which the Black person has to exist.

The President's Commission has placed the blame for racial disorders squarely on White prejudice. Improvement of conditions in the Inner Cities of America will only come with greater sensitivity and understanding among the races. I want to quicken the pace of that understanding, and help change White behavior.

Dean Brennan /2

Secondly, I deeply believe that communication is the primary agent of change. Visual communication is the untapped resource that can be brought to bear to create understanding that will form the basis for change. The motion picture film is a unique vehicle that can move people by sharing experiences.

My objective in this culminating experience of the Thesis is to bring these several convictions together, and through visual communication cause change in peoples' behavior that will in some small way help to resolve a major crisis.

Mr. Barschel, as my advisor, has approved a draft of this proposal. He has suggested that I request Mr. Richard Floberg of the School of Photography as my technical advisor. A number of people involved in inner city work have already agreed to serve as resource people.

The intensity of this experience will result in many benefits, and certainly challenges and great personal development.

Respectfully yours,

---

Gene E. DePrez  
58 West Parkway

March 12, 1968

cc: Mr. H.J. Barschel



to Mr De Prez

"THE BLACK MAN AND THE AMERICAN CITY"

Design and Production of a Visual Communication

---

Thesis Proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

School of Art and Design  
College of Fine and Applied Arts  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Submitted by Gene E. DePrez

Graphic Design and Communication

March 12, 1968

Approved by Graduate Committee

Chairman: HP

Date: 3/19/68

Advisor: Prof Barschke

Technical Advisor: Mr. Richard Floberg

## I. PURPOSE OF THESIS:

To further understanding between Whites and Blacks through the design and production of a visual communication--a motion picture film that would document the anguish and dilemma of the Negro in the American City.

## II. SCOPE OF THE THESIS:

Projected work toward the completion of the thesis would include at least the following areas:

- a. readings, research and exposure to such other resources as individuals, seminars and films for greater subject sensitivity, understanding and incite;
- b. similiar research activity on the motion picture as a medium of communication;
- c. technical research related to the production of a motion picture, with particular emphasis on the feasibility (cost and time) of various styles, techniques and processes; and
- d. the experimental execution of a short motion picture film suitable for showing to groups and for use on educational television.

## III. PROCEDURES:

The following strategy is proposed to achieve the purpose of the thesis (a tentative schedule is included to indicate how general preparation and thought during the Spring Quarter would ensure reasonable success in completing the project during the Summer Session):

1. Study--an analysis and identification of time and resources needed to complete the research, production and report phases of the thesis, including feasibility studies. (April)
2. Preparation--scheduling and/or obtaining materials, equipment, facilities and resource people. (April-May)
3. Research--the actual gathering and organizing of information relative to both the subject (content) and to the communication and technical aspects of the motion picture, leading to the definition of specific communication objectives. (April-May)

continued

4. Production of the Thesis Project--concept, treatment, storyboarding, graphics and artwork, shooting, editing and sound track. (June-July)
5. Preparation of Final Thesis Report--writing, illustration, evaluation, presentation to Graduate Committee. (August 1 thru end of Session)

#### IV. ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS:

The following are offered as alternates:

1. A Motion Picture Film (on another subject)
2. A Slide-Tape Presentation (same subject)
3. Visual Communication in a Worship Service
4. Design of a Town House Complex



Gene E. DePrez

# ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

## OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Gene E. DePrez

Date March 20, 1968

Approval of Thesis

The Graduate Committee has approved your Thesis Proposal "The Black Man and the American City" and has named Professor Hans Barschel as your advisor, with Professors Meyer and Guy, and Mr. Floberg (Department of Photography) as members of your Thesis Committee.

Please see Professor Barschel concerning the procedures for developing your Thesis, and be sure to follow the guidelines established in the Handbook of Graduate Study:

Your Thesis will be followed with a great deal of interest; what you are going to attempt to do has long been a concern of mine, and I sincerely trust that you can do something to bridge that understanding between black and white Americans that is essential to equity and social progress. As you may know, I have been attending an interracial Church for the past two and a half years, leaving a suburban church to do so, and I have become increasingly aware of the disaster that awaits American society unless useful remedial action is undertaken at once. The problem is going to require two or three generations to solve, but we must make a beginning, and I am convinced that with our resources - intellectual, technical, and social - that we can solve the problems of races, injustice, and inequality. I can think of no solution that does not begin with communication and education, so I believe that your effort is going to be a very timely, and I hope very useful, beginning effort.

I wish you the best of luck, and I would like to say again that your Thesis project will be followed with a great deal of critical interest.

Sincerely,

H.J. Brennan, Dean  
College of Fine and Applied Arts

HJB:gu

cc: Mr. Meyer  
Mr. Guy  
Mr. Barschel  
Mr. Floberg  
Graduate File

*File. This is contingent upon completion of thesis. 36 gts. Credit home properly distributed.*

*3/21*

# ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

## OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Gene De Prez, Eastman Kodak

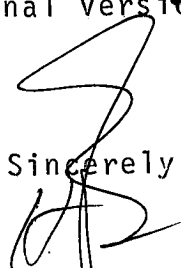
Date August 2, 1968

Please accept my congratulations on the quality of your "Ghetto Sequence"; I was glad to have had an opportunity to see it after your first rough editing. I was highly pleased with what I saw, and I think that your Sequence - which represents your Thesis - will in all likelihood be the most arresting portion of the hour long film on "Rochester's Housing Crisis".

I will look forward to seeing the final version, including the hour-long telecast on September 10.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

  
H.J. Brennan, Dean  
College of Fine and Applied Arts

HJB:gu

cc: Mr. Barschel  
Dr. Smith  
Mr. Ray

## APPENDIX B

SUBJECT RESOURCE PEOPLE CONTACTED

Aedis, Janet  
 Associate Director,  
 Regional Office  
 U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity

Alinsky, Saul  
 Director  
 Industrial Areas Foundation

Ashford, Laplois  
 Executive Director,  
 Urban League of Rochester  
 President,  
 Board of Education City School District of Rochester

Clark, Patricia  
 Teaching Fellow,  
 Urban Education  
 State University of New York at Brockport

Clayton, Glenn  
 Director,  
 Operation Equality  
 Urban League of Rochester

Corris, Robert B.  
 Director of Housing  
 Rochester Council of Social Agencies

Denslow, Dr. Stuart  
 Genesee Valley Regional Planner

Finks, Rev. P. David  
 Vicar for Urban Ministry  
 Catholic Diocese of Rochester

Grasberger, Fritz  
 Associate Director,  
 Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc.

Green, Alma K.  
 Family Relocation Advisor  
 Urban Renewal Department  
 City of Rochester

Johnson, Mildred  
 Director,  
 Negro Information Center

Kerwin, Lawrence  
 President,  
 Friends of FIGHT

Macon, Ropert  
 Architect,  
 3rd Ward Urban Renewal Plan;  
 Advisor,  
 South East Loop Renewal Area

Monroe, Rev. Johnnie  
 Minister to Hanover Houses and  
 Director, South East Loop, Atlantic Avenue Ministry  
 Rochester Area Council of Churches  
 Executive Vice President, FIGHT

Pine, Richard  
 Deputy Director,  
 Department of Urban Renewal and Economic Development  
 City of Rochester

Scher, Dr. Seymour  
 City Manager,  
 Rochester, New York

Schulman, Dr. Jay  
 Sociologist and Author  
 Cornell University

Sipprel, Robert  
 Director,  
 Rochester Housing Authority

Thomas, Peri  
 Author, Poet, Film maker

Verzillio, Dr. Andrew  
 Acting Dean,  
 College of Education State University of New York  
 at Brockport

White, Rev. Herbert  
 Executive Director,  
 Board for Urban Ministry  
 Rochester Area Council of Churches

Wilson, Mrs. Jerry  
 Chairman of the Board,  
 Action for a Better Community

Witmer, Lawrence  
 Co-author, "Edge of the Ghetto"

Woods, William  
 Director of Monroe County  
 Department of Social Services

TECHNICAL RESOURCE PEOPLE CONTACTED

Floberg, Richard  
 Instructor,  
 Motion Pictures  
 Rochester Institute of Technology

Glyn, Michael  
 Director, Editor, Vice President  
 Gordon/Glyn Productions

Gordon, David  
 Executive Producer, President  
 Gordon/Glyn Productions

Senke, Henry C.  
 Freelance Producer-Director

Ver Ploeg, Donald  
 Writer-Director-Editor  
 Eastman Kodak Company



## APPENDIX C

PROJECTED COSTS AND SCHEDULE

The following pages contain copies of the estimated expenses to produce the film as planned before the involvement with Darcy Associates, and a tentative schedule of the project.

The schedule was generally followed in shooting and editing the full documentary with the ghetto section included. Shooting was completed a week later than indicated, and editing was completed for the first showing on August 2.

Estimated Expenses to Produce 13½ min. Color Film Magnetic  
Stripe, 16 m.m. Double System Sound--

FILM

CAMERA: EF Color (Tunsten) REVERSAL

10 - 400' rolls @ 25.62	\$260.00
proc. @ .07 per ft.	\$280.00

WORK PRINT: 4000' B/W REVERSAL @ .065 per ft.	\$260.00
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ANSWER PRINT: 450' COLOR REVERSAL @.18 per ft.	\$ 81.00
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STRIPING: 450' @ .06 per ft.	\$ 27.00
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<u>SOUND MIX</u> NYC or TORONTO (one hour)	\$ 80.00
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<u>TRAVEL</u> For Sound Mix and Printing, NYC, TORONTO 3 - 4 days	\$180.00
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<u>EQUIPMENT</u> Cinema 60 Belt @ \$10 per day	\$150.00
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CAMERA: Arriflex Standard w/zoom 15 days @ 35 per day	\$300.00
--	----------

2 Film Magazines at 10 per day	\$150.00
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MOUNT: Leopod 15 days @ \$5 per day	\$ 75.00
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EXP. METER: Spectra @ \$5 per day	\$ 75.00
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LIGHT: 2 Colortran (3200 K) Pkg. in A. C. w/stands @ 10 per day	\$ 60.00
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SOUND EQUIPMENT

RECORDER: Uher 5 days @ 15 per day	\$ 75.00
AUDIO TAPE: 3-M #201 15 reels @ \$8	\$120.00

EDITING FACILITIES

EDITING BENCH W/REWINDS AND VIEWER  
MOVIOLA

<u>TAPE TRANSFER TO MAGNETIC FILM</u>	\$ 75.00
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<u>MAILING &amp; SHIPPING</u>	\$ 30.00
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MISCELLANEOUS

REELS, MARKERS, INSURANCE, ETC.	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	<u>\$2328.00</u>

APRIL Research, time and cost estimates,  
funding proposals.

THESIS PROJECT  
SCHEDULE

MAY

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
RESEARCH				1	2	3	4
RES. & FUNDING	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TREATMENT	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
TREATMENT	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
SET UP SCHED.	26	ORDER EQUIP.	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE

SHOOT	2	3	4	5	6	REHEARSAL	7
SHOOT	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
SHOOT	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

JULY

SHOOT	23	REGISTER SUMMER SESSION	24	SHOOT	25	SHOOT	26	SHOOT	27	SHOOT	28	EDIT	29
EDIT	30	EDIT	1	EDIT	2	EDIT	3	EDIT	4	EDIT	5	EDIT	6
EDIT	7	EDIT	8	EDIT	9	EDIT	10	EDIT	11	EDIT	12	EDIT	13

SUMMER SESSION

EDIT	14	EDIT	15	MIX LAB	16	MIX LAB	17	MIX LAB	18	MIX LAB	19		20
WRITE REPORT	21	22	23	24	25	26	27						
ASSEMBLE REPORT	28	29	30	31									

game design

APPENDIX D

CREDITS

"Home Sweet Home"

A Film\*

Designed and Produced by

Gene DePrez •

as part of the requirements for the MFA degree,  
College of Fine and Applied Arts,  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Edited by

Gene DePrez  
Michael Glyn

Camera/Sound Men

Ronald Mix  
James Sartin  
Herbert Eichelberger  
Walter Whitney

Additional Photography

Gene DePrez  
Henry Senke

Faculty Advisor

Hans Barschel

Technical Advisor

Richard Floberg

Produced under a joint grant by  
Eastman Kodak Company  
Xerox Corporation

\*Produced as part of a documentary, "Think About It".  
©Darcy Associates, Inc.

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